



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ONE HORSE AND SIX BIRDS INFECTED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS *County Urges Residents to Protect Themselves From West Nile Virus*

County officials announced today that a third horse has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) in Jamul. Two horses were diagnosed earlier this month. Six birds have also tested positive for the virus in Jamul, Santee, Tierrasanta and El Cajon.

"A vaccine is available to help prevent West Nile virus infection in horses," said County Veterinarian Dr. Nikos Gurfield. "Horse owners should check with their veterinarians to ensure their horses are properly vaccinated."

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease, with 25 birds in the County testing positive for West Nile virus this year alone. This disease can be transmitted to humans and horses by infected mosquitoes. So far this year, 13 horses in California have been diagnosed with West Nile virus, three of them in San Diego County.

Contact your veterinarian immediately if your horse shows any signs of the virus, which include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching or inability to stand.

To prevent the virus:

- **Eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home, and use mosquito-eating fish in horse troughs, unused swimming pools, ponds and fountains. Free mosquito fish are available from County Vector Control.**
- **Wear long sleeves and long pants when outside, especially at dawn and dusk, and stable horses during those hours.**
- **Wear insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.**
- **Maintain windows and screens to keep mosquitoes from entering your home.**

For information on West Nile virus, mosquito fish, or to report dead birds or mosquito breeding sites, call County Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO. You can also report dead birds on the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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